



# CONGRESSMAN HENRY A. WAXMAN NEWS

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CAPITOL SPOTLIGHT  
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## "ISRAEL'S AGONY"

In all the history of the modern Jewish State, perhaps no period has caused as deep anguish as the current one.

Last year at this time, the Israelis were engaged in full-scale warfare to guarantee the security of their northern border. True, last year's invasion of Lebanon resulted in hundreds of casualties. However, the invasion also brought substantial tangible military and political gains. The entire south of Lebanon was purged of PLO bases. Training camps for preparing terrorist attacks against Israel and against Jews in the diaspora were obliterated.

Perhaps most important, it appeared that Israel's military successes had paved the way for the expulsion of all foreign troops from Lebanon. What a blessing it would be for Israel if Lebanon were a truly independent, sovereign nation with normal diplomatic and trade relations with Israel.

These dreams have yet to be realized. Last week a weary and discouraged Israeli population solemnly marked the five hundredth Israeli killed in Lebanon.

It is hard for us--a society of some 240-million people--to understand the impact of 500 casualties on a nation of 3.5 million. The equivalent in U.S. casualties would be about 34-thousand deaths. This is more than half the death rate we suffered during the decade-long war in Vietnam.

Right now, most Israelis are not preoccupied with the overall casualties of the war. They are suffering deep agony and dread over the 141 Israeli military men killed since the cease-fire which officially ended the conflict.

Hardly a day goes by without a terrorist assault on Israeli soldiers in Lebanon. Two factors make these assaults possible. First, Israel must cope with a belligerent and totally intransigent Syrian government. Some diplomats speculate the Syrian President Hafez Assad has no intentions of ever withdrawing from the portion of Lebanon he and the remnant of the PLO now occupy. (Much of Lebanon is depicted on official Syrian maps as part of Syria. The Syrians have never really accepted Lebanon as a sovereign state.)

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The second factor causing Israel's agony is the insistence of the Soviet Union on blocking an orderly settlement of the Lebanese war. Since last year, the Russians have substantially rebuilt the Syrian military apparatus. They have supplied the Syrians with top-quality SA-5 surface-to-air missiles--and have also supplied the Syrians with about 5,000 trained technicians to help the Syrians master their new tools of destruction.

Obviously, Israel has no easy alternatives. To stay in Lebanon means tolerating a war of attrition that brings weekly deaths without weekly gains. The war of attrition also creates an almost irresistible pressure on the Israeli forces to engage in extremely repressive measures against Lebanese or Palestinians even vaguely suspected of perpetrating terrorist acts or giving sanctuary to suspected terrorists.

To leave Lebanon precipitously would raise the threat of rapid forward movement by the Syrians and their PLO allies--to take up positions abandoned by the Israelis. Such a sweep could leave Israel in its pre-1982 situation--with hostile forces again arrayed along her northern border.

If there is to be a solution, it must be a big power solution involving the Soviet Union and the United States. Without such outside influence, I fear the conflict and suffering of the past year will continue.

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